

**Sunday, December 18, 2022  
Fourth Sunday of Advent: Love**



*In the ancient world, various peoples lit fires to mark the turning of the light into winter's season and to pray for the return of the light. The church has Christianized that practice in the lighting of the Advent wreath. To us, these candles are signs of the growing light of Christ who is coming again in all fullness into the darkness of our world. Until the dawning of that Great Day, we watch and wait in Holy Spirit for Christ's coming into the darkness of our world, lighting candles of hope, peace, joy, and love; and remembering the promises of God with prayer.*

**GATHERING IN GOD'S PRESENCE**

\*PRELUDE "Be Thou My Vision" Hymn #339

WELCOME

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH CANDLES

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

**O Holy God of Promise, we so often place our trust in the things we can see, and touch, and easily believe. But you did not ask us to believe what is easy, you have asked us to believe what is true! Forgive us, Holy One, when we doubt the ways you work. Forgive us when we find it hard to believe an ancient story. Forgive us when we question how you chose to enter the world, born as one of us. Forgive for our lack of faith and belief in ways which seem so impossible to believe. Forgive how we hold onto the Good News of Jesus for ourselves and forget to share it with others. Help us to look in faith, open our belief, and set aside our doubts that you sent your Son – the one who has come to set us all free. Hear us now as we offer our individual prayers of confession**

**in silence to you . . . [remain silent and then join our leader when told, "Let us join our voices together again" . . . ] Thank you, God, for hearing all our prayers. We offer them in the name of your Son, Emmanuel, God with us. Amen.**

**ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS**

Song: "Carol of the Bells" ERPC Handbell Choir

Young Disciples

*K-12th Grade students are invited to go downstairs to Sunday School*

**LISTENING TO GOD'S WORD**

**PRAYER OF READINESS**

**God of Hope, as we enter into this time of year when the darkness grows deeper, we wait expectantly for the light of your coming. Help us not to fill our time with busy-ness, but to embrace these quiet, reflective days. Open our eyes and hearts to see and experience all the ways you come to us. As we study and pray and wait, fill our hearts with hope, peace, joy and love. We pray in Jesus' name, Amen.**

SERMON "Hope is on the Way in God's Way"

Scripture Matthew 1: 18-25

**RESPONDING AS GOD'S PEOPLE**

**PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

To share a joy or concern: Click [HERE](#) or use the QR code  
Offering

To give online: Click [HERE](#), or use the QR code.

Song: "Candles of Advent" Sanctuary Choir

\*DOXOLOGY

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

## GOING IN GOD'S NAME

### \*CHARGE AND BLESSING

### POSTLUDE Instrumental

Some of our worship elements are drawn from the writings of Rev. Jan Brooks, Cottonwood Falls Presbyterian Church, Laura Smith as posted at [erpc.org](http://erpc.org), Fr. Rick Morley, and posted on <http://www.rickmorley.com/archives/207>

The Session has called a congregational meeting at the end of worship this morning for the purpose of hearing and acting on the report of the Congregational Nominating Committee regarding electing officers and those to be elected to fill out other congregational committees as needed.

*Plan to join us for our Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and New Year's Day worship services.*

#### Christmas Eve:

*Our 5:00 and 7:00 services will be full of candlelight, music, Scripture readings and a message for all ages. Both services will be simulcast.*

*Our 9:00 contemplative candlelight service will include the sacrament of communion. This service will not be simulcast.*

#### Christmas morning:

*We will gather in Fellowship Hall at 10:00 for sharing food, Christmas carols, a conversation about the birth of Jesus and sharing what Christmas means to us. This event will not be simulcast.*

#### New Year's Day:

*We will return to our normal worship at 9:30 with live service.*

Thanks to all of you who are providing much needed support for ERPC.

#### **2022 Financial Status:**

\$97,000 of additional income from both pledge balances and non-pledge giving is needed to meet ERPC budgeted needs for 2022.

#### **2023 Pledges vs Goal:**

\$121,000 additional pledges are needed to meet our goal for 2023.

Thank you for 53 pledges of \$299,000 received to date!  
Totals as of December 2.

Pastor Pat Smith, [pat@erpc.org](mailto:pat@erpc.org)

Don Watson, Music Director, [don@erpc.org](mailto:don@erpc.org)

Cathy McGee, Executive Administrator, [office@erpc.org](mailto:office@erpc.org)